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THE·AWAKENING·

AND·OTHER·SONNETS·BY·

JAMES·H·COUSINS·



·DUBLIN·MAUNSEL·&·Co·LIMITED·

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THE AWAKENING

AND OTHER SONNETS BY

JAMES H. COUSINS



DUBLIN MAUNSEL & Co. LIMITED

THE AWAKENING.

IN this enchanted hour 'twixt light and light
Of sinking moon and widening morn, mine ear
Gathers from quivering leaf, and river clear,
Sounds sweetened by the touch of passing Night;
While on a leafy platform, shut from sight,
But to the heart, by hearing, doubly near,
A songbird, throbbing with the opening year,
Outsoars in joy his wing's supremest flight.

New day, new birth, new hope, new power have given
Wings to the soul to soar, and leave behind
Life's inessentials. What majestic sky
Is this where, unamazed, from some old heaven,
I hear the Harp of Angus on the wind,
And mark Cuchullin's Shade speed singing by?

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IRELAND IN AUTUMN.

SOMEWHAT of Autumn's splendour round her lies;
Yet think it not the prelude of her death,
For there is that within her heart which saith
The living word that blossoms in her eyes:
"Heed not the portent of the season's skies,
Nor deem the clouds more than a passing breath
Sundrawn from half a world that offereth
Its votive incense to the year that flies."

The hand that bevels down the shortening day
Is one with that which quickens leaf and wing,
So, prophecy of pregnance in decay
Thou hast, and in thine Autumn, germs of spring
To vindicate the lips that late have said:
"They dreamed a lie who deemed thee wholly dead."

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GOD'S LURE.

(TO IRELAND.)

GOD willed of old to lift thine ancient Name
That thou, thro' suffering made most wise, most pure,
Should'st bear before all men the Soul's white lure,
And lead them to and thro' the purging flame.
But, lest thine eager feet should foil the aim
Of Time's slow builders, building strong and sure,
He mingled with thy fire that shall endure,
Somewhat of earth, for shackle, not for shame.

Thou art not wholly earth, nor all divine;
And tho' rude hands of sons undutiful
Build in the clay, and soil thy royal dress,
Mother of deathless kings! let joy be thine!
Thou still hast beauty for the beautiful,
And proud glad lovers for thy loveliness.

FOR THE STATUE OF A STATESMAN.

CLEAR, with the clearness of a mortal eye—
Not spotless all, but, even as the light,
Perfect in imperfection, did his sight
Behold the bounds and stature of the sky
Of man's desire; and sweep afar and nigh,
And sound the depth, and scale the utmost height
Of all he was—and was not; all he might—
And might not, be. This much did he descry.

And his was statesman-craft that knew no call
Save truth and right; but with unswerving wing
Sought Freedom's goal; nor paused at any hest
That recked not all men's good, nor heard thro' all
Life's loud and multitudinous murmuring
One human heart beat in one human breast.

LOVE'S ADVENT.

I CANNOT set a finger on the place,
Or time, or circumstance, and surely say:
Twas thus, and then, across the gathering gray
Of my dark life shot the first golden trace
Of love for thee. I see within thy face
Something that has been with me all the way,
Affinity and reflex night and day,
And, lo! my heart feels, knows, and loves apace.

How? Why? I cannot tell. I only know
One wide white love has cancelled all the sum
Of all life's lesser loves. I can but speak
As might the watcher on some Northern peak,
Long night-bound, who, Eastward, beholds a glow,
And cries: The day, the glad great day is come!

LOVE'S APPEAL.

OH, let me love thee, if but one brief hour.
Oh, let me take unchidden from thy lips
The luscious fruitage which, to him who sips,
Brings joy unreckoned in the angels' dower!
Or fill one spacious moment with the power
Of pure unmeasured love—tho' stinging whips
Of fire, next moment, into black eclipse
Drive me from out thine Eden's passionless bower!

Then thou mayest set an angel at the gate
Of thine inviolate heart, with burning blade
Flashing: I shall not weep. I shall have known
Earth's sweetest guerdon. I shall stand elate
On life's pale summit, strong and undismayed,
Immutably, immortally alone!

LOVE'S INFINITY.

SINCE first my heart awoke to winds that blew
Infinite need, lo! it has climbed its stair
Of dreams, and to the unresponsive air
Stretched hungry hands, and called . . and called for you.
Then, answerless, it moulded of the dew,
And splendid noons, and sunset's tumbled hair,
And deep sea-music, something more than fair
Which long it strove to know—but never knew.

And now your cheek is warm against my cheek:
Yet, is Love satisfied? Nay! . . . evermore
Thy hands are full of promise, and thine eyes
Gleam with a spirit-light I still must seek,
But never find; yea, joy has joy in store,
And heaven another heaven within its skies!

LOVE'S PEACE.

(AT GLENCAR, SLIGO, IRELAND.)

HUSHED with the mellow minstrelsy of rills
That, on cool piney summits, laughing wake,
And swan-like sing themselves away,—the lake,
Like a soft eye, with quiet rapture fills;
And of its fulness overflows, and thrills
Seaward, to mingle where loud billows break,
And tell, when tempests their harsh clamour make,
Of peace enfolded in these happy hills.

So, love, may we from each exalted hour
Go forth, with hearts filled full of quiet power
That to the powerless hope and solace brings;
And mingle with the world's tumultuous days
Rumours of song by sunlit mossy ways,
And peace that dwelleth at the heart of things.

HEAVEN AND EARTH.

TRUTH in untruth, wisdom on folly's tongue,
And substance in a shadow—hear ye this!
Once on a time, amid primeval bliss,
In starry ears a bridal song was sung,
And Heaven and Earth, in wedded rapture, strung
Ecstatic harps, and took one reeling kiss;
But, sated with much joy, Earth grew remiss,
And fell from love,—ah, me! the Earth was young!

O trembling tears of dawn in Nature's eyes!
Forget your sadness: lo! the waited hour
When recreant Love turns loveward thrills the dome,—
Earth lifts mute praying hands in tree and flower,
And Heaven in all the windows of the skies
Hangs nightly lamps to light the wanderer home!

THE COMING OF NIAMH.

SOFTLY, as comes a wind across the sea
That thrills the waves to music on the beach,
And stirs the trees to whisperings each to each,
And bids the birds pipe low sweet song of glee;
So, like a summer morning, came to me
My Queen, my Niamh; and her gentle speech
Spake regal lineage longer than the reach
Of memory, older than the thrones that be.

And thro' the tumults that around me rise,
She speaks of hidden and tremendous things—
Grails yet unwon, and Quests that never cease;
And calls me forth to where, with quenchless eyes,
She with the deathless dwells, and folds her wings
Enthroned in vast, unutterable Peace.

VISION.

WHEN I from life's unrest had earned the grace
Of utter ease beside a quiet stream ;
When all that was, had mingled in a dream
To eyes awakened out of time and place ;
Then in the cup of one great moment's space
Was crushed the living wine from things that seem :
I drank the joy of very Beauty's gleam,
And saw God's glory face to shining face.

Almost my brow was chastened to the ground,
But for an inner Voice that said: "Arise !
Wisdom is wisdom only to the wise :
Thou art thyself the Royal thou hast crowned :
In Beauty thine own beauty thou hast found,
And thou hast looked on God with God's own eyes.

A DEDICATION.

I SAID: Since golden dust of garnered sheaves
Dulls in each crevice of the threshing-floor,
And swift sweet wings that seek a sunnier shore
Have left a troubling silence 'neath our eaves;
I will arise, tho' Earth in Autumn grieves,
And bear with pipes and dancing to her door
Harvest of dreams from fields of ancient lore—
Alas! I bring a few poor fallen leaves.

Yet of my leaves I twine for your loved brows
This chaplet,—yours: not mine, for you have trod
My being's bounds; yours is the hand that ploughs
And sows, and draws new life from the dead sod;
And you have moved among my drooping boughs,
And stirred them with a wind that comes from God.

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